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RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA PRIORITY 3600
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 1717
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KATHMANDU 001196

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SUBJECT: FORMER PRESIDENT CARTER CALLS FOR U.S. TO TALK TO
MAOISTS

Classified By: Ambassador James F. Moriarty. Reasons 1.4 (b/d)

Summary

1. (C) In meetings with the Ambassador on June 14 and 16, and strongly in a June 16 press conference, former President Jimmy Carter called for the United States to end its policy of not meeting with the Maoists. Although press reports claimed in the wake of Mr. Carter's June 15 session with Maoist chief Pushpa Kamal Dahal (aka Prachanda) that Mr. Carter had agreed to press the United States to take the Maoists off the terrorist list, the former President made no such promise. Mr. Carter stressed his concern publicly and privately about ongoing abuses by the Maoist Young Communist League and termed the security situation "unacceptable" for a free and fair Constituent Assembly election. The former President also hailed the progress Nepal had made in its peace process and urged that special attention be taken to ensure that the election would be inclusive.

End U.S. Policy of No Contact With Maoists

2. (C) In an early morning meeting on June 14, the day after his arrival in Nepal, former President Jimmy Carter gently asked the Ambassador why the United States had no contact with the Maoists. The Maoists were participating in the peace process and had joined the Interim Parliament, and more recently, the Interim Government, Mr. Carter noted. By not meeting the Maoists, was not the U.S. depriving itself of the ability to influence Maoist behavior? The Ambassador replied that, with all the other diplomatic missions in Nepal meeting with the Maoists, the Maoists were already being told to renounce violence and join the political mainstream. Moreover, if the U.S. changed its policy without an improvement in Maoist behavior, it would send the wrong message to the Nepali people, the Government of Nepal (GON), and especially the Maoists. On June 16, at the airport prior to his departure, Mr. Carter confirmed that he had publicly called for the end of the U.S. no-contact policy with the Maoists. As he had said in response to a question at a press conference immediately beforehand, he was of the opinion that the U.S. should be in direct communication with the Maoists.

No Call For Taking Maoists Off Terrorist List

13. (C) In his two meetings with the Ambassador, former President Carter did not call for the U.S. to take the Maoists off the list of specially designated global terrorist entities. In fact, he noted that he wanted to be careful not to interfere with that process. According to the Carter Center's Nepal Field Director Darren Nance and Nance's deputy Sarah Levitt-Shore, Mr. Carter also said nothing different in his meetings with Nepal. Press reports after Mr. Carter's June 15 session with Maoist Supremo Pushpa Dahal (aka Prachanda) and Dahal's deputy Dr. Baburam Bhattarai quoted Dahal and Bhattarai claiming the former President had agreed to lobby the U.S. for delisting. According to Nance, former President Carter was upset when he saw the headlines and told Nance: "I am no lobbyist for the Maoists."

Carter Raises Young Communist League Abuses

14. (C) Mr. Carter reported to the Ambassador June 16 that he had raised several cases of human rights abuses by the Maoists, specifically the Young Communist League (YCL), when he met with Dahal on June 15. He had provided details of twenty cases to Dahal at a gathering of all the parliamentary parties on June 16. Mr. Carter said he was confident these incidents were true because they were based largely on the firsthand knowledge of the Carter Center's 13 long-term observers (LTOs). He proudly described how, since March, the LTOs had visited cities and remote villages in 70 of Nepal's 75 districts. The former President indicated that Dahal had

KATHMANDU 00001196 002 OF 002

agreed to investigate. In the press conference on June 16, Mr. Carter cited his conversation with the Maoist chief about the problems with the YCL and Dahal's personal assurance that the Maoist leadership took its responsibility to end the YCL's "bad behavior" seriously. When he met the Ambassador June 16, the former President noted the YCL had been on the receiving end of extreme abuses as well, notably in the Terai, which the Ambassador freely acknowledged.

Security Situation "Unacceptable"

15. (C) In his discussions with the Ambassador and others, as well as in his public statements, Mr. Carter stressed the need to address the problems of insecurity and violence. According to Nance, Prime Minister Koirala told the former President during their second meeting on June 16 (Note: Their initial meeting was on June 14.) that he agreed about the need to improve security. In fact, the PM indicated he intended to replace Home Minister Sitaula within 15 days. During his June 16 press conference, Mr. Carter stressed that a safe and secure environment was a "core requirement" for Nepal's transition and upcoming Constituent Assembly election, adding that the present law and order situation was "unacceptable." His press statement went on to say that the GON needed a strong police force with the "morale, capacity and authority" to do its work.

Progress Made, More Needed

16. (C) The former President told the Ambassador June 16 that he was impressed with the rapid progress Nepal had made in its peace process. He said much the same thing in his press conference earlier that day. Mr. Carter cited the efforts the GON was making to include marginalized peoples in the country's politics and society. He stated to the Ambassador that he knew of no country that had made as rapid strides in this area. But the former President also noted that more would have to be done, and, as he noted in his press conference, the Constituent Assembly election was "only an

interim step in a larger, longer and more important process
-- the constituent assembly election itself."

Comment

17. (C) From post's perspective, former President Carter's visit, like the excellent work of the Carter Center's long-term observers, has been useful in highlighting many of the same issues of ending Maoist abuses, ensuring security, and creating an inclusive system that the U.S. has been urging for Nepal. While we disagree with Mr. Carter's call for direct communication with the Maoists, we would certainly welcome the opportunity to have such communication if Maoist behavior undergoes significant change. The former President offered to be of assistance if possible and concluded by saying that he was prepared to return to Nepal with an expanded observation mission prior to the Constituent Assembly election -- barring other unforeseen commitments.
MORIARTY